3: Wallace & Hoebel E-4, 5 (1933, 1945) 1952
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726 fun of a little fighting; they could snipe with bows and arrows from the fringe of the fray, although Rhoda Greyfoot says they never went on the "hardest" raids. For a married woman to join up with some man who was going on the warpath was, as has already been shown, the commonest manner of absconding.

When the entire band intended a series of onslaughts upon a distant enemy (three to four hundred miles from headquarters was a commonplace distance for a raid), they not infrequently took women along. The women carried small lodges and a few supplies to set up a temporary camp, the preferred location being one which provided a convenient place from which to strike at the enemy and was at the same time far enough removed to be safe from pursuit. Although the Apaches took their best medicine men along and the Kiowas included in the party a buffalo doctor who had power to heal wounds and an owl doctor with power to tell what was going to happen, the Comanches encouraged their medicine men with the greatest healing power to remain in camp and care for the wounded as they were brought in.[9]

723 487 A war party carefully studied and mapped any unfamiliar country that it expected to traverse. All those needing information about the route and the terrain were assembled and instructed by the well-informed elders. After they were seated in a circle, a map was plotted on the ground showing rivers, hills, valleys, water holes, and any other identifying or unusual features. Then a line was drawn to represent the route planned for the first day. From a bundle of sticks, marked consecutively beginning with "one," a stick with a single notch was stuck at the point where the party was to camp at the end of the first day's journey. When the novices had committed this much to memory, the second day's journey was illustrated in the same manner. Instruction continued in similar fashion until it was felt that each man could follow the route satisfactorily. Thus a group could usually traverse without difficulty a region entirely new to members of the party. It is reported that one such instructed party, none of whom were over nineteen and none of whom had ever been in Mexico, were able to travel from their main camp on Brady's creek, Texas, and raid as far as the city of Monterrey without mishap and

[9] Lehman, *op. cit.*, 38, 148; Alice Marriott, *The Ten Grandmothers*, 35.

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with no other guidance than the instructions furnished before starting out.[10]

The leader of an organized war party was absolute dictator of all the activities of his followers as long as they remained with the party. The legal governmental powers of the leader have been considered elsewhere, but for the sake of clarity some repetition here is essential. The men obeyed their leader implicitly and willingly. Each knew that a brave leader never asked of his men what he himself would not readily do. Each knew, too, that to disobey might bring disaster on the party. If, on the other hand, disaffection did set in, the disgruntled warrior and those who sided with him merely withdrew to go their own way.

It was the duty of the leader to determine the objective of the raid, to plan the routes, to determine the camping places and the periods of rest, to designate the scouts, to appoint the cook and water carrier, to plan the general strategy of the attack, to divide the booty, and to order a retreat or make a truce with the enemy.

One or two scouts were kept from a one-half to a day's march ahead. A war party rarely traveled at night by choice, and the men rode without much talking, steady and quiet, all intent on where they were going. About midday they stopped to rest and water the horses. At night they camped, preferably in a grove near fresh water. If they were in enemy territory and a hill was available, the war party circled gradually up and around the hill until it reached a camping spot halfway up the hill on the side opposite the direction from which it had approached. The leader sent two sentries to the top of the hill, and the rest of the party slept soundly through the night. An enemy following their trail was exposed on the side of the hill under the view of the sentries in plenty of time to warn the sleeping encampment.

The leader carried a sacred pipe. When the evening meal was over, the pipe was formally filled, lighted and, after the usual offerings to the spiritual powers, passed to each warrior in turn. Then the leader talked to his men, telling them of the country, the best routes, and the safest places of retreat, giving them advice and telling them how

[10] R. I. Dodge, *The Plains of the Great West*, 414, from an account by Pedro Espinosa, a Mexican-Comanche warrior.

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never by choice made an offensive attack in the dark; they never raided when the moon was a crescent with the horns pointing upward, for the moon was then "full and running over" and there was the likelihood of rain, after which their trails could be easily traced on the moist earth.[12] They struck swiftly on moonlight nights or surprised undefended, isolated settlers by day when circumstances were favorable, killing or capturing their victims and driving their stolen animals back to their rendezvous, where they were attended until such time as they could return to the main camp. When approaching the camp or settlement, the warriors separated and entered it by pairs or small groups. If an enemy dog barked, the raiders tossed it a piece of meat to quiet it. The older, experienced men cut loose the more valuable horses and led them out, while the younger men gathered up the loose animals. At times it was understood that the horses taken by each man were to be his own; at other times, they were common property to be divided by the leader of the expedition. By means of signals, the raiders kept in touch with one another and would reunite when they had completed their foray or when considerations of safety demanded.

Frequently, of course, the Comanches engaged an enemy prepared to offer resistance. One simple strategy was to send forward a small party on swift horses to lead the enemy into an ambuscade. Sometimes this plan was successful, but often those hidden in ambush were unable to restrain their eagerness and rushed out too soon, causing the stratagem to fail. Although the leader planned the attack, when the battle began each man was free to fight according to the dictates of his own medicine and his personal inclinations.

As a rule the Comanches relied upon surprise, upon the effect of a sudden and furious dash, accompanied by an unearthly, blood-curdling war whoop. They avoided a pitched battle when they were matched by an equal or greater number. They preferred to surprise a much smaller party. If the enemy was not surprised or put to flight at once but stood his ground, the wedge-shaped mass of Comanches quickly assumed battle formation. The wedge turned into the shape of a huge ring or wheel without hub or spokes, whose rim consisted

[12] Julia Estill, "Indian Pictographs near Lange's Mill, Gillespie County, Texas," Texas Folklore Society *Publications*, IV, 105.